Using Blended Spaces to Improve Learning in Accountancy

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Background

- ACCT 202 Management Accounting is a required course for an accounting major and an elective course for non-accounting majors.

The Challenge

- Students not coming to tutorials, not preparing
- Lit. says attendance 50% lectures, 20% tutorials
- expect to ask but not answer Questions (Farley, et.al 2011)
- LU accounting classes similar
- Failure to review prerequisite material inhibits learning

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Solution

- Provide review materials
- Allow for more choice about when, where and how
- Blending online & f2f

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Data
collected from

- formal course evaluations,

- learning management system (Moodle)
  - lessons,
  - quizzes
  - chat rooms

- student focus group,

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Discussion of Data

- We'll look at overview of data and one chat in detail

- Show a blend of f2f and online activities produces better engagement and learning outcomes than just f2f

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The Blend in Acct 202

- <u>F2f</u>
  - Lectorials (combo of lecture and tutorial
  - Drop-in office hour
- <u>Online</u>
  - lecture notes, readings
  - a "chat room"
  - lessons (including review material and worked examples),
  - quizzes,
  - forums,

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Overview of Student Online Activity – quizzes, chats, lessons (Table 1)

- 30 students registered in ACCT 202 in Semester 2, 2011.

- Average 465 interactions with course webpage/student

- Average 79 active engagement with chats, quizzes, lessons

- Chat is the dominant activity for half (15) students
  - Detailed discussion below

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Chat Rooms

- replace f2f tutorials
- discussion questions and practical applications.
- Slightly asynchronous provides reflective space
- Synchronous – provides stimulation
- The chat room 50 minutes/week, 10/12 week course
- Students given questions to prepare (as in f2f tutorials)
- focus on current week's topics but open to anything
- Tables 2 & 3 show the participation and engagement
- participation rates 30 – 73% class/chat
- Average contributions/ participant 7 – 36/ chat,
  - Varys with topics, etc.
- Lecturer dominates over all (as per f2f classroom)
- Student contributions increases as chat culture is established
- Chat 7-10 dominated by students
- Chat linked 20 study question solutions were accessed 265 times by 25 students, an average of 10.6 times per student.
- This suggests the students valued blend of the chat rooms & supporting study question solutions

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Casual Conversation in Chat # 10

- Language contiguously constructs and realises
  - the world of the participants,
  - their relationships and
  - the message itself (Halliday and Hasan 1985)
- Text analysis discloses involvement and commitment (Eggins & Slade 2004)

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Analysis Chat #10

- Discuss
  - Phases of chat 10 (Ward 2004) (Table 4)
  - How the morality of casual phases builds academic phases
  - Appraisal of chat and class
- **Meta-text:**
- *How can we best leverage the next face-to-face class?*
- *what do we need for the exam?*
- *what will give us an understanding of these accountancy issues?*

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Orientation Phase

Table 5

- provides arrival/log-in time
- re-establishes relationships, topics and related fields The coming Garden Party is the vehicle for this.
- Language - short, highly ellipsed turns

Exam, Lectorial and Content Phases (Table 6)

- Overtly central to the chat.
- Final lectorial & exam are imminent
  - students bring Qs about each to the interaction.
- Content Phase 'now' learning of accountancy concepts.
- Language formal of pragmatic discourse, including 3 move pedagogic exchange (Sinclair & Coultard 1975):
  - Teacher Initiation ^ Student Response ^ Teacher Feedback
- The data exemplifies, with the teacher 'Mary Louise' initiating: (Table 6)

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Student Control

Table 7

- But often the less teacher-focused online mode encourages students to interact independently (Loebel et.al 2005):
- Table 7 (Content Phase)
- chat shows that students feel 'at home' there
- and by reference, in the physical classroom.
- chat is a place to take risks with
  - their relationships with their teacher and classmates and subsequently
  - understandings of accounting concepts.

Appraisal

- Appraisal tools the students use to approve of others and evaluate the accountancy concepts (Eggins & Slade 2004) they grapple with in the chat include:

- Appreciation

- Judgment

- Amplification

- Mitigation

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Appreciation -speaker's reaction to the world

- Data examples:
  - I *like* flow charts
  - haha the prizes were *yumy* thanks mary!
  - TP *sounds* good too

Judgment - instantiates commitment to behaviour

- Data examples:
  - I *agree* with Mei
  - it gave me such a fright! *Blame* Sid
  - *dam* u Cecilia u *split the beans* on ma costume

Amplification- grades speaker's commitment to a contribution and provides negotiation space for others to re-formulate.

- Data examples:
  - (How have you enjoyed it??)
    - SOOOOOOOOO *much,*
  - yeh im studying ACCT *every* day!
  - (it's more an economics thing isn't it? Demand of ocmplementary goods)
    - complementary goods are a consideration for long-term product mix but not *so* much for constrained resources

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Mitigation - allows a speaker to play down their commitment to their contribution

- Data examples:
  - TP *sounds* good too
  - He *should have* made his training session out side of class time *obviously* he is committed to ACCT202 like the rest of us

Appraisal Summary
(Table 8)

- ## 32 instances of negative appraisal (Table 9)
  - casual field
  - Humour
    - Teases
    - Other humour
    - Beeping
    - accountancy
- ## 32 of positive appraisal
  - academic field

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Beeping – negative appraisal in action (Table 10)

- Student control of unacceptable behaviour
- "Sid" uses chat call sign to disrupt academic discussion
- 5 other students divert from academic field to chat field and stop Sid with negative appraisal of his behaviour

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Gossip – negative appraisal of non-attendance (Table 13)

- gossip that determines how the group ought to behave. It has three constituents:
  - 3rd party focus ^ Substantiating behaviour ^ Pejorative evaluation (Eggins & Slade 2004)

  Frank's absence from the chat is negatively evaluated by the group as a breach of group solidarity.

Conclusions Data shows:

- Range of activities provides for different learning options/styles

- High engagement with online lessons, chats & quizzes

- Chat analysis shows students working as a cohesive group for academic purposes

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Table 1:   *Dominant online activity of students*

Activity usage*	No. of students	% of class (30)
Predominantly* online lessons	1	3.3
Predominantly online lessons, followed by quizzes	1	3.3
Predominantly quizzes	2	6.6
Predominantly quizzes, followed by online lessons	3	10.0
Predominantly quizzes, followed by chat room	1	3.3
Predominantly chat rooms	9	30.0
Predominantly chat rooms, followed by online lessons	1	3.3
Overwhelmingly* chat rooms, followed by online lessons	1	3.3
Predominantly chat rooms, followed by quizzes	2	6.6
Overwhelmingly chat rooms, followed by quizzes	2	10.0
Balanced* usage	4	13.3
No access	1	3.3
Missing data	2	6.6

*   The determination of activity usage was based on the number of interactions a student had with each activity, as follows:
Predominantly: 50 to 90% of the student's interactions were with that activity
Overwhelmingly: 91%+ of the student's interactions were with that activity
Balanced usage: the student's interactions were spread approximately evenly between the three activities.

Table 2:   *Participation in chat rooms*

Number of chat rooms	Number of Participants	% of class (30)
10	2	6.7
9	3	10.0
8	1	3.3
7	5	16.7
6	4	13.3
5	1	3.3
4	2	6.7
3	4	13.3
2	2	6.7
1	3	10.0
0	3	10.0

Table 3: *Participation and engagement in chat rooms*

| Chat room | No. of students | % of class (30) | Contributions | | Duration (minutes) |
			Total	Average per participant**	
Chat room #1	8	30.0	99	12	62
Chat room #2	12	43.3	87	7	63
Chat room #3	21	73.3	247	12	55
Chat room #4	10	36.7	123	12	60
Chat room #5	9	33.3	73	8	55
Chat room #6	14	50.0	125	9	64
Chat room #7	16	56.7	519	32	63
Chat room #8	16	56.7	300	19	61
Chat room #9	13	46.7	228	18	75
Chat room #10	18	63.3	654	36	63
Lecturer*	1	n/a	585	59	n/a

* The average contributions for the lecturer are based on participation in all ten chat rooms.

** Rounded up.

Table 4 Turn Phases in the Chat

Turn Phases	Content	Genre	Total Number of Turns
Orientation/Garden Party A		Casual	81
Exam		Academic	101
Lectorial		Academic	60
Garden Party B		Casual	41
Content		Academic	54

Table 5: Edited Excerpt from Orientation Phase

Participant	Chat	Field
Lorraine	hi	chat
Lorraine	are you going to garden party malcolm??	Garden party
Steven	Hi malcolm, where are you?	chat
Fatima	(Enters chat)	
Cecilia	and ill bring the fertilizer	Garden party
Malcolm	Ovcourse!	Garden party
Malcolm	Hi Mary	chat
Steven	Whats the garden party	Garden party
Amahl	(Enters chat)	
Sid	haha ill bring water	Garden party
Sid	Cecilia you bring fert	Garden party
Lorraine	Its when we all bring plants and plant them Stevie	Garden party

Table 6 Edited Example of Pedagogic Exchange

Participant	Chat	Field
Mary Louise:	have you all started working on your time budgets for study week and exams?	Exam
Molly:	yeh im studying ACCT every day!	Exam
Penelope:	yes Ive done mine!	Exam
Cecilia:	yes if I start this Sunday I get 3 full days to study for each exam before my first exam	Exam
Mary Louise:	so now you have to manage you time … allocation is the easy bit	Exam

Table 7 Edited Sequence of Student Controlled Interaction

Participant	Chat	Field
Alfred:	if a supplier offered a deal providing 1000 units at a far better margin but the quantity was more than what demand was would you still buy the product and	Content
Cecilia:	and capacity	Content
Lorraine:	you wuld have to factor I storage costs	Content
Malcolm:	Yes, if you have the ability to store it	Content
Marion:	you could do a cost beneift analysis	Content
Steven:	storage is a scare resource that may cost more than the benefits Alfred	Content

Table 8 Summary of Appraisal Fields

Field	Negative	Positive
Chat	23	7
Garden party	5	1
Exams	4	5
Content		1
Course		8
Lectorial		10
TOTALS	32	32

Table 9 Summary of Negative Appraisal types

Teases	18
Other humour	4
Beeping	6
Accountancy	4
TOTAL	32

Table 10 Students Controlling Unacceptable Behaviour

Participant	Chat	Field	Appraisal
Malcolm	Why is everyone beeping me?	Chat	negative
Lynn	Its such an annoying sound	Chat	negative
Molly	What is the beeping thing even for	Chat	negative
Sid	Yeah there doing it o me too	Chat	
Sid	Turn the sound right up	Chat	
Lynn	haha I had it turned up and it gave me such a fright! Blame Sid lol	Chat	negative
Molly	Someone shud change the beeping sound to something betta	Chat	negative
Lorraine	Is beeping going to be in the exam?	Chat	negative
Lynn	agreed	Chat	negative

Table 11 Edited Gossip Example

Participant	Chat	Field	Gossip Constituent
Cecilia	Frank Cant extends his apologiesx fot not being on here today as he has gym training in town cheers mary	chat	Absent third party, Frank, identified. Behaviour substantiated
Cecilia	Hes leaving right as we speak	chat	Behaviour substantiated
Sid	na mary hes sitting beside me	chat	Behaviour substantiated
Sid	hahaha	chat	
Mary-Louise	Thanks for passing that on Cecilia	chat	
Mary-Louise	Thanks Sid!!	chat	
Steven	Why cant Frank extend his apologies?	chat	Pejorative evaluation
Penelope	I agree with Steven	chat	Pejorative evaluation
Sid	me too	chat	Pejorative evaluation
Cecilia	That's his last name Stevie!		Pejorative evaluation
Penelope	He should have made his training session out side of class time obviously he is committed to ACCT202 like the rest of us	chat	Pejorative evaluation